



Berkshire Ornithological Club



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for 2014

8.00pm 19th November 2014 at Room 109 Palmer Building, University of Reading

The President, Neil Bucknell, in the chair and 52 members present

1. **Apologies for absence:** Sally Wearing, Roger Stansfield, John & Fiona Farnsworth, Ken & Sheila Cottam, Bert Miller, Dot & Ken Lincoln, Edie Shaw, John & Katherine Walker.
2. **Minutes of meetings held on 20th November 2013 and 11th December 2013:** the minutes were approved and signed by the President.
3. **Matters arising:** there were no matters arising.
4. **Honorary Treasurer's Report and the Club Accounts:** Bill Nicoll presented the Treasurer's Report and Accounts. Firstly, the Treasurer thanked the auditors (Donald Reid Group) and declared that the club is solvent and has sufficient reserves for foreseen events.

In the report for the year the Treasurer pointed out that 2013/14 had been an atypical year because of the transfer of Atlas funds and the publication of two annual reports. He then went on to compare the income and expenditure in 2012/13 with that in 2013/14, in order to explain the quite large differences between the two years. In 2013/14 the income was that of a typical year while in 2012/13 the income was higher due to a 'one-off' event (the Pipit Fund) and several generous donations. In 2012/13 the expenditure was low because no annual report was published, while in 2013/14 the expenditure was high due to the paying over of the Atlas fund to BBAG and to the publication of two years of annual reports. This has meant that we have had a high-income, low-expenditure year followed by a typical-income, high-expenditure year.

There were no questions and the accounts were accepted unanimously.

The meeting thanked Bill for his work on the accounts during the year.

5. **Election of Officers:** The Committee proposed the following:
Chairman: Tim Ball.
Hon. Treasurer: Bill Nicoll.
Hon. Secretary: Sally Wearing.

All were approved unanimously. The meeting thanked Mike Turton for his work as Hon. Secretary over the past 5 years.
6. **Election of Ordinary Members of the Committee:** There were 2 vacancies on the Committee, each for three years. The Committee's proposal that Becky Thomas and Richard Stansfield be elected to the Committee was approved unanimously.
7. **Changes to the Constitution:** Mike Turton summarised the changes to the Constitution, which had been circulated with the agenda for the meeting. There was one minor correction to the change as circulated – the 6th line of revised clause 7.6 should read "...and if at the adjourned meeting...". There were no questions and the proposal to accept the changes as circulated and amended was carried unanimously.

8. **Report of Chairman and Officers:**

The Chairman, Tim Ball, presented the Report of Chairman and Officers.

Membership: thanks to Iain Oldcorn for his work as Membership Secretary. Membership remains fairly static at 318, but with a slight fall-off in the rate of new memberships. Members were encouraged to switch to paying by Standing Order.

Meetings and Field trips: a varied programme. Attendance was down at all indoor meetings, with the experimental meeting with Reading Museum particularly poorly attended. The very wet

weather had an impact on the outdoor programme with two trips cancelled due to flooding and others badly affected. The coach trip to the Bird Fair was not well supported and made a substantial loss.

Building a younger Club: the Club is eager to increase the number of younger members. Links are being developed with the University Ornithological Society and members of the Club are willing to give talks and/or demonstrations to schools and young peoples' clubs.

Rejuvenating Publications and Communications: thanks to Becky Thomas and Chris Foster for raising the Club profile on Facebook and Twitter and to Mike Taylor (who is stepping down) for his work as webmaster. The website is in the process of being redeveloped. Publication of The Birds of Berkshire was a huge success with good reviews nationally and the project has produced a good financial surplus which is giving a substantial boost to the club's conservation fund. Two annual reports (2009 and 2010) were also published during the year with the report for 2011 due to appear shortly.

Berkshire Records Committee / Recorder Review: the 5-yearly review is in progress in conjunction with Newbury & District Ornithological Club. A request was made for any input to be sent to Tim Ball by the end of the year.

The President expressed his thanks to everyone involved in running the Club for their work.

9. Conservation Report

This was presented by Renton Righelato. He listed the members of the Conservation Committee and the activities carried out by the Club:

- Being a local voice for bird conservation issues in discussions with planning authorities and bodies such as NE, TVERC and the Local Nature Partnership.
- Advising landowners on habitat management.
- Allocating grants from the Conservation Fund, including a number of grants in recent years for Barn Owl nest boxes.
- Initiating BOC projects including the Tree Sparrow recovery project, the designation of Padworth Lane Gravel Pit as a nature reserve and the joint project with Reading Borough Council at Fobney Island.

The President expressed his thanks to everyone involved in the conservation activities of the Club, especially Ken Moore for his work with landowners and Brian Clews for his work in marketing the Birds of Berkshire.

10. Birding highlights of 2013/14

A summary of the birding highlights of 2013/14, prepared by Ken Moore, was delivered by Renton Righelato. A plea was made for anyone who has any breeding records of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker and Turtle Dove to submit them.

11. Any other business:

- It was noted that the setup in Room 109 made it difficult for speakers to use the microphones without standing in front of the screen. Ray Reedman to raise this with the University.
- At least one member has heard that the MoD have permission to shoot Red Kites in the vicinity of RAF Benson. Although this is outside the county (and comes under Oxford Ornithological Society), the Club will make enquiries to see if this is correct.

The President closed the AGM at 8.40pm; this was followed by a talk from Andrew Cleave on the Bermuda Petrel.